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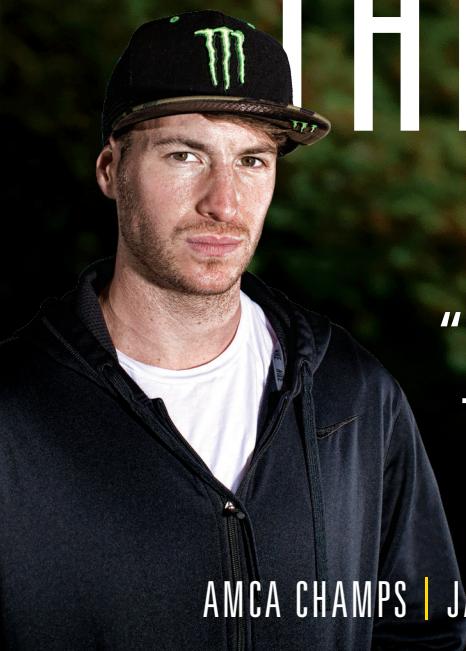
• MATISS KARRO •

THE CONTENDER!

MAXXIS MX2 TITLE HOPEFUL TALKS TOUGH

"I'M FINALLY GETTING BACK
TO WHERE I SHOULD BE!"

THE RETURN OF TOMMY SEARLE...



AMCA CHAMPS | JAMIE LEWIS | MATT PHILLIPS | LEWIS GREGORY | X GAMES



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MATIIS 'THE ARROW' KARRO WHIPS ONE OUT FOR NUNO'S NIKON
© NUNO LARANJEIRA

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THOMAS PAGES CHANGES THE SPORT OF FMX FOREVER...
© JÖRG MITTER/RED BULL CONTENT POOL



RIGHT TRACK

Where next for Tommy Searle...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer



TOMMY
SEARLE



THE ARROW!

Wilvo Forkrent KTM's Matiss Karro gets straight to the point of why he's so popular with race fans around the world...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Nuno Laranjeira and Bavo Swijgers

L'ikeable' is a crap word. It's a bland compliment right up there with 'nice' in a list of adjectives that are in such common use they don't actually mean all that much any more. It's a lazy word used by lazy journalists to let the reader know that, basically, the person in question isn't a dick – you might as well say that they're 'okay' or 'all right'.

I've used it loads of times – more than once to describe that 'likeable Latvian' Matiss Karro. The alliterative effect is hard to resist but that's no defence – it's still just plain lazy and it does Matiss no

favours at all to be described in such an inoffensive manner. In fact, it does him an injustice...

The truth is that the 22-year-old from Riga, the largest city in the Baltic states, is one of the most charismatic riders around with his perpetual grin, big hair and even bigger personality making him a fan favourite both in his native Latvia and here in the UK where he's raced since 2009.

"I think fans like me because I'm a racer," he says when we sit down under his Wilvo Forkrent KTM team awning at the British GP. "Example – in Bulgaria I was seventh and finished 17th because I got together with a rider because I wanted to pass him. Seventh would have been an awesome result. >>









ROMANIA

REVISITED!

GEOFF WALKER HEADS BACK TO A HAPPY HUNTING GROUND TO SWING HIS LEG OVER THE 2015 KTM ENDURO RANGE...

Words by Geoff Walker

The 2015 KTM Enduro launch felt something like a strange homecoming. It's a few years since my last assault on the Red Bull Romaniacs extreme enduro and being flown out there to ride the tracks of one of the biggest races on the calendar was a fantastic experience – and the fleet of 2015 KTM enduro bikes didn't disappoint either.

The range of 125, 200, 250 and 300cc two-stroke and 250, 350, 450 and 500cc four-stroke models were lined up and ready for a full eight hours of riding some of the greatest terrain on the planet. For 2015 KTM HQ have made a few refinements but no major changes – the bikes are massive sellers and the company have taken the strategy to tweak the bikes and offer the customer the reliability and ride they are used to.

The big news for me is the company sticking to the PDS rear shock set-up rather than moving to the linkage system. This shows to me that the ownership of the Husqvarna brand – which is running what's in effect an upgraded KTM base

bike with the linkage system across its enduro models – is a win-win situation.

The press introduction paperwork indicates the few changes to the range with the outline 'benefits' shown as 'improved power for two-stroke engines, rear suspension modified on some models, a more visible speedo, a better resistance to impact on the handguards, increased comfort through softer grips and electric starter on all models except the 125'.

This makes for a quick read alongside the 'highlight features' pointed out in the introduction with the 'new MAE digital speedometer, new digital Neken handlebar, Improved handguards, new softer grips, updated shock on the 125 and 200, new black rims by Giant, orange frames and new colours and graphics'.

These are the highlights according to those who know so this tells us the most popular bikes in enduro are going to continue for 2015 pretty much at their current level which in my mind is a good thing. When you have bikes that perform as well as the range of KTM's then why change for the sake of it? **>>**



THUNDER FROM DOWN UNDER!

Young, fun and loaded with talent. Matt Phillips is taking the Enduro World Championship by storm...

Words and photos by Future 7 Media

Hands up if you've ever heard of Matt Phillips? Thought as much, he's by no means a household enduro 'name'. But despite being a relative EWC rookie he's a rider very much on the up-and-up. To put it simply Matt is the world's fastest enduro rider that you've likely never heard of. A rider that if he carries on the way he's riding might well lift the 2014 Enduro 3 World Championship. Oh, and he's only 21.

It's not often, in any sport, that a relatively inexperienced youngster jumps in at the deep end and delivers the goods. But that's exactly what Phillips is making a habit of doing. Enduro Junior champion at the first time of asking last year, his switch to the KTM factory this season is going better than anyone expected.

DBR sat down with the laid-back Tasmanian to find out more...

European Connection

"I first got to Europe in 2011, for the ISDE in Finland. It was a tough race but I turned a few heads with my times. However, it wasn't until the following year at the ISDE in Germany that I was able to open a few doors to get to Europe. In 2012 I was racing the Yamaha WR450 – and without being disrespectful it was a sh*t bike. It was slow and it didn't turn."

"I was having a bad year on the thing and wasn't enjoying my riding. Heading for the mines was a serious option again. In Germany I got talking to the Aussie Husqvarna importer and began to work something out. He was able to offer me the chance to get into the EWC but still be based at home. I mulled it over a lot. Stefan Merriman warned me it wouldn't be easy but that it was a risk worth taking. In the end I decided to go for it and just do it. So in March 2013 I packed a bag and left for Chile."

Making The Switch To Enduro

"I was always there or thereabouts in motocross back in Australia – kind of knocking on the door of a big result but it never really materialised. My best result was when I was doing some of the supercross series with Honda – I actually beat Mike Alessi. That was cool."

"Looking back now my approach to training at home is why motocross didn't work out for me. I couldn't get my head around busting out 30-minute motos. I was playing about and free riding."

"Up until my 18th birthday my folks ploughed a lot of money into supporting my racing. But after that it had to stop. I still wanted to race Pro in Australia, and felt like I had potential there, but when there's no deals on the table and you've got to try and fund it yourself it's just not possible."

"Around the tail end of 2010 I was in Australia and went trail riding with Jess Gardiner and we got talking about enduro. She suggested I give it serious thought and actually rang up Geoff Ballard, who she was riding for, and put my name forward for a ride for 2011."

"Next thing I know Geoff is on the phone offering me a contract. The pay wasn't great but if I won the bonuses would be more than my salary so I said yes. My heart still wanted to race motocross but with nothing out there this was my best option to avoid getting a real job down the mines in Tassie."

"Geoff was cool too and said I could squeeze in some motocross if the calendar allowed. I figured I'd go for it and if things went well then getting back to motocross the following year might happen. Turns out that never happened. I found out pretty quick that I like enduro more than motocross and I was good at it too. The results came and the vibe in an enduro paddock was much more chilled – people actually wanted to be my friend and help me out."

>>



SECOND CHANCE!

Just a few years ago Lewis Gregory looked washed up with a Pro career blighted by arm-pump and his team folding on the eve of the new season. Then he rediscovered two-strokes...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Nuno Laranjeira



IN GOOD COMPANY!

WE HEAD TO SWITZERLAND FOR A CLOSE-UP APPRECIATION OF SCOTT SPORTS WITH ARNAUD TONUS AND CLEMENT DESALLE WHERE WE ALMOST END UP HUGGING A TREE...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Clemens Bolz/Scott

If by some freak occurrence you find yourself behind a Grand Prix rider on a mountain bike trail – like DBR unexpectedly did after the Italian round of the FIM Motocross World Championship – then prepare yourself for pain. We're not talking about muscle ache, palpitations or exhaustion (well, sort of) but through the consequences of rocks, stumps, roots, holes and roost.

Scott decided on a slightly novel way to give their 2015 product wares some media attention. Dispense with the press kits, photos, samples and lengthy explanations of the gear and instead give CLS Monster Energy Kawasaki's Arnaud Tonus and a partly-willing journalist a run through woodland loops armed with thousands of Euros worth of bike equipment.

Grazes, cuts and a small lump of flecked pedal-cut flesh later and we're finally ready to check out some of the best off-road riding goggles on the market.

We've come to Switzerland and Givisiez, near Bern, home of Scott Sports' European HQ since 1978. The day before Rockstar Suzuki's Clement Desalle suffered a massive crash at Maggiora and the Italian Grand Prix while Arnaud Tonus was runner-up in MX2. We've all made our separate ways over the mountain range, across the border, past the lakes and into the idyllic setting of Switzerland. Desalle nurses a sore left wrist and would give the Scott bike trip a miss. So we head out with Arnaud and Thomas from Scott's marketing department.

Trying to follow both is a major task, not only in energy but also handling the trail. As you'd expect, Tonus throws the bike around like a BMX regardless of the obstacles and terrain. At one heavy-hitting point we start to miss the conventional product presentations in a florescent light-lit room with laptop attached to a big screen until I finally get a section right and feel great. Tonus only just remains in view.

The Spark 910 and kit copes admirably with the rough forest paths and is a level above the actual rider trying to do it justice. The stamp of quality is something that feeds through most of Scott's product range and the divisions of Bike, Wintersports, Motorsport and Outdoor.

With their Hustle and Tyrant goggles Scott have given 'vision' to many of us, including a host of MX's top names like the aforementioned, Trey Canard, Pro Circuit, Searle and more. One of the best parts of their 2015 update – apart from some cool new shades that also sync with their 450 and 350 gear as well as boots – are the Junior 89Si Pro goggles that now come in the Oxide colour schemes.

It means kids, juniors and youths can strap on the same goggles as their racing heroes instead of having to make-do with the usual standard shades and two-tone blocks. For adults all the hallmarks of the Hustle and Tyrant are in place for 2015; the fit system, Nofog lens treatment, chrome lenses, frame ventilation and the market-leading roll-off device – the Works Film System.

Part of the Scott experience on this trip doesn't involve wincing, frantic pedalling and near-misses. A tour of the >>

SCOTT



SETTING THE STANDARDS FOR PREMIUM RACEWEAR